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PP RUEHPA  
DE RUEHBP #0052/01 0321122  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 011122Z FEB 10  
FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1080  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 0717  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 0314  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOAM//

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAMAKO 000052

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 01/29/2020  
TAGS PTER, KCRM, PINS, PGOV, ML  
SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING AND LIBERATION OF KOUNTA LEADER  
ILLUMINATES POLITICAL FISSURES IN NORTH  
REF: 09BAMAKO280

Classified By: Political Counselor Peter Newman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S) Summary: In the early morning of Jan 22, Kounta traditional chief and Mayor of Anafis Baba ould Sidi Elmoctar was kidnapped from his residence.
2. (S) On Friday, Jan 22 before dawn, Telemsi Arab and Imghad Tuareg smugglers kidnapped octogenarian and diabetic Kounta traditional chief Baba ould Sidi Elmoctar.
3. (S) Northern Malian communities generally viewed the kidnapping of ould Sidi Elmoctar as disrespectful and dangerous to the relative calm in the region.
4. (S) On Monday, Jan 25, the GOM sent a delegation comprised of Minister of Culture Mohamed Elmoctar, Malian Army Colonel Abderhamane ould Mehemmed, and other officials to negotiate the release of the kidnapped leader.
5. (S) Although the consensus opinion is the kidnapping was a reprisal for an ambush and theft of contraband, POL contacts believe this event was a result of the leader's influence and wealth.
6. (S) By way of background, the Kounta and Ifoghas have been the traditional leaders of the Tuareg and Arab communities of northern Mali for generations. Traditionally, these groups have been known for their role in the trans-Saharan trade, and many of their leaders have been involved in smuggling and trading activities.